

Remarks

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Claims 6-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph for being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. In this regard, the Examiner has objected to certain language in some of the claims, for example Claim 6, line 2 and in Claims 15 and 18 wherein the language "comprising at least" is utilized. The term "at least" as been deleted from the claims. Further, the Examiner believes there is no antecedent basis for the use of the term "separable" before "substrate" in Claim 6, line 2. An amendment has been made for clarification. In addition, other corrections were made to the claims without intent to unduly limit the claims, for example, the term "different material" is now defined in the amended claims as well as the term "intermediate layer" in the last line of Claim 6. Rejections for indefiniteness should be withdrawn in Claims 7-14 and 16, because the claims have been deleted. Further, with regard to the use of the phrase "having various colors" in Claim 15 amendments have been made. The phrase "without wasting" has been deleted from the claim. No new subject matter has been added to the specification. Applicants submit that all rejections based on 35 U.S.C. § 112 have been met, and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 6-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 767,077 for the following reasons:

The Examiner believes that the adhesive layer 3 of EP 767,077 could be slit into three layers, particularly after processing is finished, which would render the three claimed adhesive layers comprising the transferring adhesive layer of the present invention obvious. Applicants have further defined the transferring layer as noted in the claims.

The present invention comprises the following principal features:

a) an adhesive transfer layer sheet comprising at least a substrate sheet and a transferring adhesive layer formed to be separable on said substrate sheet,

b) the transferring adhesive layer comprises at least three layers of an uppermost layer, an intermediate layer and a basement layer, arranged in such that the uppermost layer is located at the farthest portion from the substrate sheet, the basement layer is located at a closest portion to the substrate sheet and the intermediate layer is located between the uppermost layer and the basement layer.

c) the uppermost layer is adhesive to the receptor layer of the intermediate transfer recording medium and the basement layer is adhesive to a natural paper as a transfer-receiving material and the intermediate layer is adhesive to both the uppermost layer and the basement layer, and

d) each layer is formed of a material having a suitable property for the purpose thereof, which is a different material from each other and can be distinguished as a separate layer, respectively.

At normal working conditions, two layers comprising the uppermost layer and the basement layer would be enough to perform a prescribed effect as long as the material to be used in these layers have the qualities described and claimed herein. However, under severe conditions such as storage at high temperatures, that is over 60°C, or so, blurring of the transferred image may occur to some extent. Therefore, the purpose and function of the intermediate layer arranged between the uppermost layer and the basement layer is to avoid the occurrence of blurring of the transferred image at rather severe storage conditions. There is no description, suggestion or teaching in any of the

references cited herein with respect to the intermediate layer, which is disposed between the uppermost layer and the basement layer of the transferring adhesive layer in the adhesive layer transfer sheet. Specifically, in EP 767,077, an intervening layer is provided on adhesive layer 3, not between the two adhesive layers as shown in Fig. 1 of the instant application.

Further, the adhesive layer is disclosed, as being divided into two layers in Fig. 12 of EP 767,077, however, there is no reference to the intermediate layer disclosed between the divided adhesive layers made in the specification of EP 767,077.

In the uppermost layer claimed in the present invention, the resin has a glass transition temperature of not less than 60°C. Therefore, blurring of an image does not occur under severe storage conditions when temperatures may be over 60°C. Further, in the claimed invention, the basement layer comprises a transfer-receiving material, which is natural paper, which has a low melting point and is permeable. It is not necessary to have the glass transition temperature higher than 60°C as in the uppermost layer for this paper. The natural paper, having a smoothness of 10-1500 seconds to Bec's Smoothness should not be used for the uppermost layer because of the danger of having blurring occur in the transferred image under severe conditions. The use of the claimed intermediate layer allows for the two layers comprising the uppermost layer and the basement layer to be sufficient to provide the desired results under normal conditions and under more severe conditions wherein the transfer-receiving material is subject to storage temperatures higher than 60°C. In other transfer sheets, under these conditions, blurring would occur. When the intermediate layer is arranged between the uppermost layer and the basement layer as claimed in the present invention, blurring of the transferred image is avoided.

The claims have been amended to define the invention more clearly. In amended Claim 6, the classification of the resin, the recitation of natural paper having a specific smoothness for the adhesive property of the basement layer

and the description of the material comprising the intermediate layer, all provide additional clarity and definition to the claims. Similar amendments were made in Claim 18 for the printed product.

It is respectfully submitted that the European reference does not teach or suggest the presently claimed invention. Therefore, the Applicants submit that the claims meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and 103. An early Notice of Allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

2-12-04

Date

W. Dennis Drehkoff

Attorney for Applicants
W. Dennis Drehkoff
Reg. No. 27193
Ladas & Parry
224 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 427-1300